

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00
CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 INR-10 LAB-04 NSAE-00
SIL-01 SS-15 SP-02 CAB-02 DODE-00 DOTE-00 FAA-00
L-03 OC-06 CCO-00 WRDE-00 PA-01 EA-10 EUR-12
/089 W

-----020520 042010Z /61

O R 041910Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6712
INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY KINGSTON
AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L GEORGETOWN 1432

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ELAB, PINT, GY
SUBJECT: CLERICAL UNION STRIKE AFFECTS COMMERCIAL ESTABLISHMENTS
MASS MEDIA

REF: GEORGETOWN 1401

1. THE CLERICAL AND COMMERCIAL WORKERS UNION (CCWU)
24-HOUR STRIKE (REFTEL) ON THURSDAY, MAY 4, CLOSED DOWN
LARGER RETAIL STORES IN GEORGETOWN AND NEW AMSTERDAM.
SMALLER, FAMILY-OWNED SHOPS WERE NOT AFFECTED. THE STRIKE
CURTAILED RADIO BROADCASTING, HALTED BUS SERVICE IN THE
CAPITAL, AND COMMERCIAL TELEGRAM FACILITIES, AND THREATENED
TO STOP PUBLICATION OF THE TWO DAILY, GOVERNMENT-OWNED NEWS-
PAPERS. SERVICE IN THE LARGER HOTELS IN GEORGETOWN WAS ALSO
DISRUPTED.

2. NO INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS AT TOWERHILL INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
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HAVE BEEN CANCELLED. MANAGERIAL PERSONNEL OF THE COMMERCIAL
AIRLINES PLAN TO STAND-IN FOR STRIKING GROUND CREWS, AND
THE CONTROL TOWER IS MANNED BY A BRITISH FIRM.

3. SIGNIFICANTLY, ONE FOURTH OF THE 6,000 STRONG GUYMINE
WORK FORCE ALSO STRUCK THE LINDEN BAUXITE MINING
FACILITY IN SYMPATHY WITH THE CCWU.

4. CCWU MEMBERS, SUPPORTERS AND ONLOOKERS TOTALLING PERHAPS 500 PERSONS DEMONSTRATED DURING MORNING IN FRONT OF GUYANA STORES, THE LARGEST LOCAL RETAIL ESTABLISHMENT, WITH PLACARDS DENOUNCING CHRONIC SHORTAGES AND OTHER ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES AND THE DEATH OF A SEVENTY-ONE YEAR OLD PENSIONER WHO DIED IN A SOAP QUEUE THERE LAST WEEK. NO VIOLENCE WAS REPORTED.

5. THE GUYANESE GOVERNMENT, THROUGH THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION, HAS DEPLORED THE STRIKE AS LIKELY TO WORSEN THE DISTRIBUTION PROBLEMS TO WHICH THE STRIKERS ARE OBJECTING. MAY 3 PRESS QUOTED SPOKESMAN FOR MINISTRY OF LABOR AS SAYING STRIKE AIM OF DISRUPTING THE ECONOMY OF THE COUNTRY AND CRITICIZING THOSE WHO WOULD USE "EXISTING CONDITIONS" FOR THEIR SHORT TERM GAIN AND TO EMBARRASS THE GOVERNMENT. EMBOFFS HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT PRESIDENT CHUNG, WHOSE RESPONSIBILITIES ARE ALMOST COMPLETE TITULAR, CALLED IN PEOPLE'S PROGRESSIVE PARTY OPPOSITION LEADER JAGAN AND ACTING PRIME MINISTER REID FOR INDIVIDUAL TALKS THIS MORNING, BUT THE CONTENT OF THE CONVERSATIONS ARE NOT KNOWN.

6. THE PRESS OF MAY 3 VERY INCONSPICUOUSLY REPORTED IN A STORY ON PRIME MINISTER BURNHAM'S CURRENT TRIP TO THE USSR, NORTH KOREA, EAST GERMANY, AND THE UK THAT THE PRIME MINISTER WOULD ATTEND MEETINGS OF GUYANESE CITIZENS
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IN LONDON ON MAY 6 AND 7, WHICH IS THE FIRST PUBLIC INFORMATION THAT HE WOULD NOT BE RETURNING TO GUYANA ON MAY 5 AS ORIGINALLY SCHEDULED.

7. EMBASSY COMMENT AND ASSESSMENT OF THE STRIKE WILL FOLLOW TOMORROW.
BURKE

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ALLEGATIONS, GENERAL STRIKES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 04 may 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978GEORGE01432
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780191-0287
Format: TEL
From: GEORGETOWN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780594/aaaadchp.tel
Line Count: 101
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 35ee98a4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 GEORGETOWN 1401
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 16 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2796139
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CLERICAL UNION STRIKE AFFECTS COMMERCIAL ESTABLISHMENTS MASS MEDIA
TAGS: ELAB, PINT, MASS, GY, CCWU
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/35ee98a4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014